

Ashley Shields, and Katie Smith, as well as head coach, Bill Laimbeer, and assistant coaches Rick Mahorn, Cheryl Reeve, and Laura Ramus. I know my colleagues join me in congratulating the Detroit Shock on their third championship in franchise history. The people of Michigan look forward to witnessing the Shock continue to build on this success in the years ahead.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

• Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, our military is under an unprecedented stress. Over 140,000 American servicemembers are deployed fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many have made multiple deployments. Their families are also fighting on the home front to live normal lives despite repeated absences of a spouse or parent. Our nation owes our servicemembers and their families an enormous debt of gratitude. Congress has a sacred trust to provide for their needs.

The fiscal year 2010 Defense authorization bill passed by the Senate ensures that our servicemembers on the battlefield have what they need to complete their missions come home safely to their families and communities. It provides for advanced armored vehicles to keep them safe from roadside IEDS. It also authorizes an increase of 30,000 additional soldiers for the Army to help reduce the strain of repeated Iraq and Afghanistan deployments.

I commend Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN for their leadership in crafting this bill. They have carefully balanced many competing priorities. They recommended a bill that looks out for the needs of our men and women while also looking out for their families. They have made hard choices to cut programs that are not working or are no longer needed. This is not an easy task. We should all be grateful for their dedication to our military and to our Nation's security.

This bill really looks out for our military personnel and their families. It includes a 3.4-across-the-board pay raise, half a percentage point more than requested. It increases the supplemental subsistence allowance from \$500 to \$1100 per month to ensure that servicemembers and their families do not have to rely on food stamps. It also authorizes \$30 million in IMPACT aid to help communities educate military kids, including \$10 million for communities hard hit by BRAC, and \$5 million to help educate military kids with severe disabilities. It has been said time and again, that while we recruit the soldier into the military, we must retain the family. This is especially true in this time of great stress on our military. This bill recognizes and responds to this reality.

I am also very glad that once again, the Senate is passing a DOD authorization that looks out for wounded warriors. This bill requires that DOD in-

crease the number of behavioral health specialists to ensure the military has enough doctors trained to identify and prevent suicide and post-traumatic stress disorder. It also directs DOD to devise strategies for electronic medical record exchanges between the military medical and Veterans Administration systems. This is critical to ensuring a smooth transition of care from one medical system to the other, and a timely processing of disability and benefits claims. When a soldier is injured, we incur a 50 year commitment for their care. I am glad that this bill helps ensure that those promises made will be promises kept.

The Senate considered many amendments during our two weeks of debate on this important bill. There are two that I want to discuss in particular.

I am pleased that the Senate supported President Obama, Secretary of Defense Gates, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff ADM Mike Mullen and Air Force leaders in their decision to end the F-22 program. The F-22 will ensure the U.S. Air Force is dominant in future air-to-air conflicts. It is a credit to engineers and technicians who designed and built this great plane. Everyone involved in this program should be proud. However, I agree with the President that the time has come to bring F-22 production to an end so we can channel limited dollars to fielding the Joint Strike Fighter as soon as possible. I support ending the F-22 at 187 planes, and would have voted in support of the McCain-Levin amendment on the Senate floor to accomplish this.

I am also pleased that the Senate voted to reject the amendment proposed by Senator THUNE to allow gun owners to carry concealed weapons across State lines without first getting a permit to do so from the State they are entering. The second amendment guarantees Americans the right to bear arms. However, each state must be able to make reasonable rules to protect residents and public safety officers, and this amendment would have made that impossible. It also would have undermined Congress's long-standing respect for State's rights to enact and enforce their own gun laws. It is no surprise that large city mayors and police chiefs all over the country opposed this amendment. I would have opposed it also, and I believe the Senate did the right thing in defeating the Thune amendment.

In closing, I reiterate my strong support for this bill. It puts our servicemembers and their families first, provides our troops with what they need to accomplish their missions, and it makes wise investments in our Nation's security.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, with Arkansas pride and heartfelt grat-

itude, I would like to thank and honor the brave Arkansans who served as Women Airforce Service Pilots—or WASPs, as they were more commonly called—during World War II.

During the war, women were recruited to fly noncombat missions under the Army Air Corps, so that male pilots could be deployed in combat. They served as test and instructor pilots, towed targets for air-to-air gunnery practice and ground-to-air anti-aircraft practice, ferried and transported personnel and cargo, including parts for the atomic bomb, and simulated combat maneuvers. In short, they flew every type of military aircraft on every type of mission, except direct combat missions.

Between 1942 and 1944, 25,000 young American women volunteered for flight training and service. Of these, 1830 were accepted and 1074 would eventually successfully complete their training. Four of those who received their wings were from Arkansas.

Dorothy Rae Barnes, from Hot Springs, AR, graduated from Hot Springs High School in 1935. She became a WASP, she said, because she had friends who were early WASP recruits and they encouraged her to join. She graduated from flight school in July 1943 and, as a WASP, flew the AT-6, a single-engine advanced trainer aircraft used to train fighter pilots, and the BT-13, a basic trainer flown by most American pilots during World War II. After her wartime experiences, she returned to Hot Springs, where she still lives today.

Geraldine Tribble Vickers Crockett, from Stevens, AR, became interested in flying because of an older brother, who was a flight instructor. He enrolled her in a civilian pilot training program that he was teaching in Little Rock and it was there that she earned her private pilot license. She went into the WASPs in 1944 and, like Dorothy Barnes, flew AT-6 and BT-13 aircraft. After deactivation, she went on to get her instructor and commercial licenses and taught flying to veterans on the G.I. bill. She now lives in Palm Springs, CA.

Betty Fulbright White, from Clarksville, AR, was in the last WASP class to graduate in December 1944. During her shortened service, she pulled targets for gunnery practice and transported cargo. After the war, she returned to Clarksville, where she passed away in 1985.

Thirty-eight women died during their service. They were denied military honors and their families bore all the costs of transporting their bodies home and arranging for their burials. One of those was Lea Ola McDonald. Lea McDonald was born in Hollywood, AR, on October 12, 1921. She entered WASP training in Houston, TX, in January 1943 and graduated in April 1944. She was killed less than 4 months later while flying an A-24 attack bomber on a practice flight at the age of 22.

During their time in service, these women faced overwhelming cultural

and gender bias. They received unequal pay, did not have full military status, and were barred from becoming military officers. At the end of the war, the women were ordered to leave military service and paid for their own transportation home. It was not until 1977 that the WASPs who served during the war were provided veterans' benefits.

WASPs were America's first women to fly military aircraft and are a source of inspiration for current and future generations of Americans. I am so proud of these women from Arkansas, and from all over the United States, who served our country under dangerous and difficult circumstances. While we could never fully express the extent of our appreciation for their service, President Obama signed Public Law 111-40 on July 1, 2009, authorizing Congress to bestow a gold medal in honor of these patriotic Americans. I was honored to be an original cosponsor of the bill and I am happy that Congress has bestowed this long-overdue honor.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION

● Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the Tillamook County Creamery Association, a farmer-owned dairy cooperative that was founded 100 years ago. In 1909, 10 small independent cheese plants formed an association in Tillamook County, OR, to produce, distribute, and market quality cheese products that are now sold across the country. Today, Tillamook Cheese is cooperatively owned by 115 dairy farming families. As a national leader in the dairy industry, the Tillamook County Creamery Association produces some of the highest quality milk for cheese-making.

Tillamook County Creamery Association has been honored, not only for their quality dairy products, but for their commitment to community and environmental stewardship. The farmer-owners have been recognized nationally for their dedication to maintaining healthy herds and farmland. They have worked to improve water quality, protect local salmon habitat, and rebuild stream habitats in Tillamook County. In addition to being responsible stewards for Oregon's environment, they've also been advocates in addressing hunger in Oregon communities. In partnership with the Oregon Food Bank, the Tillamook County Creamery Association has contributed countless meals to families in need and worked with school districts to help provide cheese for school lunch programs.

In addition to cheese production, the Tillamook County Creamery Association contributes to the local economy by attracting nearly 1 million tourists every year, making it one of the top tourist attractions in the State. The Tillamook County Creamery Associa-

tion is a shining example of dedication to the State of Oregon and to the health of the coastal economy. The cooperative's mission is "the controlled and profitable growth of consistent, high quality, great tasting Tillamook branded products to meet the demand of the marketplace while optimizing returns to members." The Tillamook County Creamery Association has achieved that vision and much more in Oregon for a century and will undoubtedly carry on that tradition for years to come.

I encourage my fellow Oregonians, my colleagues in the Senate and the entire nation to recognize this anniversary and to congratulate the Tillamook County Creamery Association on 100 years of excellence.●

COMMENDING MAYOR PAT RUSSELL

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I wish to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation in recognizing Pat Russell, from Keene, NH, for her four decades of distinguished service to the State of New Hampshire. On August 1, Pat is retiring from her role as commissioner of the New Hampshire State Liquor Commission, and I am pleased to submit this statement to the RECORD.

Pat Russell has spent her life serving her community, her State, and her country. She was elected to six terms in the New Hampshire House of Representatives and two terms as mayor of Keene. She served with distinction on President Clinton's Council for Developmental Disabilities and for the past ten years she has served on the New Hampshire State Liquor Commission.

To each of these roles, Pat brought a willingness to roll up her sleeves and get to work for those she served. Her record of accomplishment and her wide circle of admirers speak to the qualities that defined her work: intelligence, persistence and devotion to the State of New Hampshire and her beloved city of Keene.

As Governor of New Hampshire, I was looking for someone with these qualities to fill a coming vacancy on the State Liquor Commission. I offered the position to mayor Pat Russell of Keene, who graciously accepted. Since that day in 1999, Commissioner Russell has overseen what she refers to as "a perfectly oiled machine with absolutely fantastic employees." Indeed, under Pat's leadership, the commission has thrived, contributing over \$100 million each year to New Hampshire's general fund.

New Hampshire is proud and grateful for Pat's service and I know her absence will be felt by all who have relied on her leadership and strength. On a personal note, Pat has been a dear friend and mentor to me for over 30 years. I have admired not only her multifaceted professional abilities, but also her commitment to make a difference for the people of New Hamp-

shire. I wish her well in a much-deserved retirement, but I also believe that Pat still has more she wants to do. I know that whatever she does, it will be in the service of others.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing our commissioner, the Honorable Pat Russell.●

COMMENDING THE HARVEY S. FIRESTONE CLASS OF 1969

● Mr. VOINOVICH. Madam President, today I would like to congratulate the members of the 1969 Class of Harvey S. Firestone High School in Akron, OH, on the 40th anniversary of their graduation. Graduates of Firestone's Class of '69 have gone on to become distinguished and accomplished educators, scientists, doctors, artists, entertainers, athletes, public officials, entrepreneurs, and moms and dads. This is a tribute not only to those students, but also to their teachers who gave lavishly of their time, attention and knowledge to ensure a sound foundation for almost 400 young men and women.

The State of Ohio has been long recognized for its excellence in education, and the 1969 graduates of Firestone High continue to leave a legacy that is a testimony to that excellence. This weekend these graduates will travel from all parts of the country and beyond to reminisce, and rekindle friendships. I ask Members of the Senate to join me today in congratulating the Harvey S. Firestone Class of 1969.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3288. An act making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3293. An act making appropriations for the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.